



Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

AUG 4 1998

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

The Honorable Sherwood Boehlert
Member, U.S. House of Representatives
Alexander Pirnie Federal Building
10 Broad Street, Room 200
Utica, NY 13501-1270

Dear Congressman Boehlert:

Thank you for your letter on behalf of your constituent, Mr. Ralph L. Benson, regarding a fee that may be added to some consumers' telephone bills by carriers to recover their contributions to the universal service support mechanisms. On May 7, 1997, the Commission, as required by the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (1996 Act), adopted a first Report and Order to implement the Federal-State Joint Board's recommendations on universal service. The Commission established universal service support mechanisms that fulfill Congress's goal, as stated in Section 254 of the 1996 Act, of ensuring that affordable, quality telecommunications services are available to all American consumers, including those located in high cost, rural, and insular areas and low income consumers. In addition, these mechanisms implement Congress's mandate to ensure the nation's classrooms' and libraries' access to the vast array of educational resources that are accessible through the telecommunications network. These support systems also will link health care providers located in rural areas to urban medical centers so that patients living in rural America will have access, through the telecommunications network, to the same advanced diagnostic and other medical services that are available in urban communities.

In the 1996 Act, Congress stated that all telecommunications carriers that provide interstate telecommunications services must contribute on an equitable and nondiscriminatory basis to universal service. The Commission implemented this statutory provision by requiring all telecommunications carriers to contribute to the universal service support mechanisms. Neither Congress, nor the Commission, require carriers to pass this contribution on to their customers. To the contrary, carriers decide how and to what extent they recover their contributions. Carriers, however, may not mislead customers as to how they recover contributions and may only recover an equitable share from any particular customer.

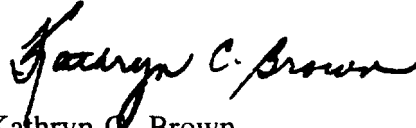
The Commission is monitoring the universal service support mechanisms and their impact on telephone ratepayers. This issue will be carefully reviewed as the support mechanisms are administered.

Journal of Management Education 30(6)

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Your constituent's letter has been placed in the official public record of the universal service proceeding (CC Docket No. 96-45). I appreciate your interest in these important issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kathryn C. Brown". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'K'.

Kathryn C. Brown
Chief
Common Carrier Bureau

SHERWOOD BOEHLERT
23D DISTRICT, NEW YORK

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3223

June 1, 1998

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Ms. Karen F. Kornbluh
Director
Office Of Legislative Affairs
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, N.W.
Room 0700-808
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Ms. Kornbluh:


Enclosed is correspondence that I have received from Mr. Ralph L. Benson of New Hartford, New York.

Mr. Benson is upset at a recent charge on his telephone bill for the "Universal Service Fund." Mr. Benson's telephone company explained that this charge was approved by the FCC, and he would like to know why the charge was approved and what the money is used for. I ask that you please review this case and give it every consideration. I appreciate your assistance in this matter.

Thank you for your time. If you have any questions please direct them to my District Office, Alexander Pirnie Federal Building, Room 200, 10 Broad Street, Utica, New York, 13501-1270.

With warmest regards,

Sincerely,


Sherwood Boehlert
Member of Congress

SB:djp
Enclosure

RALPH L. BENSON
36 ROCKPORT ROAD
NEW HARTFORD, NEW YORK 13413

MAY 28 1998

May 26, 1998

The Honorable
Congressman Sherwood Boehlert

Dear Mr. Congressman:

Am writing direct to you to voice my concern on recent additional charges on my monthly phone bill as charged by my carrier, VarTec Telecom.

Charges appeared on my statement labled Univ Svc Fnd.

When I contacted VarTec Telecom, was advised these charged as of February this year were approved by the FCC. Further advised these charges are not for my benefit but all proceeds as related to these charges would be used for Roads, Hospitals, Libraries, etc.

As a telephone user, was never advised that I would have to pay these charges or at best request for my permission.

Would appreciate your office contact me to advise of the legitimacy of these charges issued by the FCC and charged to me on my phone billing.

Sincerely,


Ralph L. Benson